

CHRONOLOGICAL NOTES ON BYZANTINE DOCUMENTS, I

In our recent study of *The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt (CSBE)*,¹ we remarked (p.vii) that "we are very much aware that more work remains to be done on this subject." The present article is the first of a series devoted to such further work. We intend to deal both with substantive topics not treated in *CSBE* or on which we can now say more than we did there, and with critical problems in individual texts. This first installment is a group of remarks in the latter class, largely items which could not be treated in *CSBE* because they were found or resolved after printing was far advanced.

1. BGU XII 2148

This lease from Hermopolis creates uncommon difficulties in its dating formula. The editor's text reads:

Ὑπατείας τοῦ δεσπότου ἡ[μῶν Φλ(αυίου) Λέοντος τοῦ αἰωνίου]
Αὐγούστου τὸ γ' κ[α] [τοῦ δηλωθησομένου?]

The lease concerns a crop τῆς πέμ[πτης] νέας ἰνδικτίονος (lines 8-9).

The editor restored the consulate on the basis of the fact that Leo I was the only fifth-century emperor whose third consulate fell in a fifth indiction year. Given the circumstances of the finding of the papyrus (*BGU XII*, p. xix), an assumption of a fifth-century date is reasonable, and the argument then follows correctly.

1 Stud.Amst. 8, Zutphen 1978.

There are nonetheless difficulties: (a) the use of *νέα* in the fifth century with reference to indictions is extraordinarily rare; of dated texts, only *SPP* XX 117 (A.D. 411) and *SPP* XX 121 (A.D. 439) can be cited, and there are only two other possible texts for which exact dates are lacking.² A fourth-century date after *ca* 348 would be expected in a text using *νέα* in this manner.³ (b) The handwriting of the papyrus is compared by the editor with *P. Ryl.* IV 624 and *P. Herm.* 6, both from the Theophanes archive, and thus of the first quarter of the fourth century.⁴ While such comparisons are not of a nature to compel an exact date, they do favor a fourth-century date for *BGU* 2148. (c) The description of land as *γη ιδιωτική* (line 10) is common still in the fourth century, but very rare thereafter.⁵ (d) All other references to the village mentioned (*Ψωβθονχεναρσιήσις*) are dated to the third century,⁶ 200 years earlier; one would prefer a shorter gap.

These arguments, individually perhaps inconclusive, as a group point strongly to the fourth century as the date of *BGU* 2148. Can a suitable year be found? No perfect fit can be offered, but a date late in 375 seems to us attractive. The consuls of 374 had been Gratian III and Fl. Equitius, and in 375 no new consuls were recognized, dates being given to the postconsulate of the consuls of 374.⁷ A fifth indiction began (and its crop fell) in early summer, 376. Now it is not at all uncommon for scribes to write *ὑπατείας*, "consulate," in place of a correct *μετὰ τὴν ὑπατείαν*, "after the consulate,"⁸ and if this was done in *BGU* 2148, the date would be the fall (i.e. after Thoth 1 = 30.viii and before 31.xii) of 375. We can see no other possible dates in the fourth century. An interpretation which rests on the assumption of a scribal error must remain uncertain for the present, but we think that the considerations set out above and the banality of the error (we count at least 13 examples) speak for the date in 375. In sum, we propose to restore these lines as follows:

2 *PSI* I 80.18–19 and *I. Philae* II 225; on these and in general on "new" indictions see CSBE 30–35, on which these remarks are based. The editor's date to "early summer" on the basis of the use of *νέα* was rejected already by P. J. Sijpesteijn and K. A. Worp in *ZPE* 26 (1977) 281, who demonstrate that (if we are in 466) a date very early in the year is necessary to allow the crop which will be harvested in the coming fifth indiction still to be planted.

3 CSBE 34.

4 Dr. Maehler has kindly sent us a photograph of the papyrus from which we can attest to the correctness of his observations.

5 There are no other examples in *BGU* XII, for example; cf. *WB* s.vv. for the distribution.

6 See Marie Drew-Bear, *Le nome Hermopolite: Toponymes et sites* (Am. Stud. Pap. 21, Missoula 1979) s.v. for the evidence.

7 Cf. CSBE 114 s.a. 375.

8 See CSBE 50–54. The examples are largely—but not entirely—from the early months of the year, when such an error is most natural.

ὑπατείας τοῦ δεσπότου ἡ[μῶν Γρατιανοῦ τοῦ αἰωνίου]
 Αὐγούστου τὸ γ' κ[α]ι [Φλ(αοῦίου) Ἐκυτίου τοῦ
 λαμπροτάτου].

For the formulas of this pair of consuls, see *CSBE* 113–14.

2. P. Edmondstone

This manumission document was acquired in Egypt by Sir Archibald Edmondstone, Bart., in 1819, and a lithographic facsimile was published in T. Young's *Hieroglyphics: Collected by the Egyptian Society* II (London 1828) pl.46. Texts based on this facsimile were published by Ernst Curtius,⁹ C. Wessely,¹⁰ Grenfell and Hunt,¹¹ and L. Mitteis,¹² none of whom apparently ever saw the papyrus or a photograph of it. The papyrus has provoked extensive commentary and reference, in legal studies particularly.¹³

The papyrus itself was subsequently (1831) acquired by Sir Thomas Phillipps, the renowned and fanatical British book and manuscript collector.¹⁴ It subsequently passed, along with the rest of the remaining unsold bulk of the Bibliotheca Phillippica, into the possession of Phillipps' grandson, Thomas Fitzroy Fenwick, and was still there, in Cheltenham, in the 1930's.¹⁵ In 1973 it was sold by Sotheby's in one of their long series of auctions of Phillipps material.¹⁶ It is owing to the kindness of Sotheby's

⁹ *Anecdota Delphica* (Berlin 1843) App. I.

¹⁰ *Jahresbericht k.k. Staatsgymnasium in Hernals* 13 (1886/87) 47–48. Wessely remarks that the papyrus had disappeared by his time so far as was known at the British Museum.

¹¹ *P. Oxy.* IV, pp.202–203.

¹² *M. Chr.* 361.

¹³ As well as what is listed by Mitteis *ad M. Chr.* 361; *Grundzüge* 252 nn.2 and 4; *Grundzüge* 271 ff., see e.g. R. Taubenschlag, "Die Geschichte der Rezeption des römischen Privatrechts in Aegypten," *Studi P. Bonfante* I (Milano 1930) 405 = *Opera Minora* I (Warsaw 1959) 236 esp. n.260; cf. II, 815, index under *M. Chrest.* 361; E. Seidl, *Rechtsgeschichte Aegyptens als römischer Provinz* (Sankt Augustin 1973) 135; O. Montevecchi, *La papirologia* (Torino 1973) 201; Kreller, *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen auf Grund der Graeco-Aegyptischen Papyrusurkunden* (Leipzig 1919) 420 (index); F. Pringsheim, *The Greek Law of Sale* (Weimar 1950) 37 n.5; I. Biezunska-Malowist, *L'esclavage dans l'Égypte Gréco-Romaine II: Période Romain* (Wroclaw/Warsaw/Krakow 1977) 72 with bibliography, 124, 144, 145.

¹⁴ See A.N.L. Munby, *Portrait of an Obsession* (New York 1967).

¹⁵ O. Montevecchi, *La papirologia*, 455 s.n. Cheltenham, based on Preisendanz, *Papyrusfunde und Papyrusforschung* (Leipzig 1933) 286.

¹⁶ *Bibliotheca Phillippica, Medieval Manuscripts: New Series, Part VIII, Catalogue of Manuscripts on Vellum, Paper and Papyrus of the 4th to the 17th Century*, 28 November 1973, Lot 573; a photograph is printed as Pl.I.

that we have been able to come into contact with the present owner of the papyrus, a private collector in Paris.¹⁷

Our particular concern was chronological. According to all editions, the papyrus is dated in the consulate of Constantius VII and Constantius Caesar III, Tybi 17 of the 13th indiction. The consulate is 354; Tybi 17 is 12 or 13 January; and indiction 13 is 354/5. The consulate thus points to 12.i.354, the indiction to 12.i.355, an anomaly various editors have resolved differently without comment.¹⁸ We thus listed the papyrus as an example of the not uncommon phenomenon of consulate given erroneously in place of postconsulate.¹⁹ Our curiosity, however, was aroused by the letters $\epsilon\iota\pi\omega$ () printed by editors before $\upsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ in line 1; the detailed photograph provided by the present owner allows us to see (a) that the final sigma of the originally written $\upsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ was altered to nu; (b) that the scribe then evidently added $\mu\epsilon\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \tau\eta\nu$ in the margin before the start. We think that we can see] $\alpha\ \tau\eta\nu$. The piece on which the ending nu of that phrase and $\upsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota$ stand has come loose at some point and been pasted down too high, so that the tau and eta are somewhat damaged and dislocated.

Our view that "consulate" is a common error for "postconsulate" is thus confirmed by this correction of one example to the correct form. The date of the papyrus is thus shown to be 12.i.355.

A few notes on the text, based on Sotheby's plate and the photograph supplied by the owner, may be added here.

- 1 For $\upsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ read $\upsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ (ν ex s), preceded by $[\mu\epsilon\tau]\grave{\alpha}\ \tau\eta\nu$. Strokes after ζ and γ .
- 2 Read the date $\tau\tilde{\upsilon}\beta\iota/\iota\zeta''\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \iota\gamma'\ \iota\upsilon\delta\iota\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \text{'}\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\phi\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\varsigma\text{'}\ \pi\acute{o}\lambda\epsilon\iota$; η of $\Theta\eta\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ ex corr.; $\Theta\eta\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ pap.
- 5 Delete dots; read $\gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota[s]$.
- 6 $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ vac $\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$ pap.; $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$ pap.
- 9 $\upsilon\pi\eta\rho\epsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\varsigma$ pap.; $\rho\epsilon\pi\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$, 2nd ϵ corr. to ι or $\epsilon\iota$.
- 13 Read $\tau\rho\acute{o}\pi[\omega]$.
- 22 For $\text{'}\text{Α}\mu\mu\omega\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$ read $\text{'}\text{Α}\mu\mu\acute{\omega}\nu\iota\omicron\varsigma$.
- 23 For $\Phi\iota\tau\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ read $\Phi\iota\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$.

3. *Pap. Lugd. Bat. XIII 8*

In line 2 the editor reads the date as $\Phi\alpha\rho\mu\omicron\upsilon\theta\iota\ \kappa\delta$. On the plate in E. Boswinkel and P.J. Sijpesteijn, *Greek Papyri, Ostraca and Mummy Labels*

17 Whom we thank most cordially for his ready and courteous assistance and in particular for an enlarged photograph of the left side of the papyrus.

18 CSBE 52 n.10 lists these. The slip in *M. Chr.* 361 ("360 n. Chr.") is taken over by some unwary scholars without checking.

19 See CSBE 50–54 for discussion.

(Amsterdam 1968) pl.44, it can be seen clearly that the numeral is κζ. The date is thus 22.iv.421, not 19.iv (correctly recorded in *CSBE* 117 s.a. 421).

4. P. Med. inv. 62 = *Aegyptus* 56 (1976) 69

We cite this papyrus in *CSBE* (p.66) as an example of discord between dating criteria, with the regnal year indicating vii-viii.579 and the indictions, consulate and Oxyrhynchite era years taken together pointing to vii-viii.580. This discrepancy was noticed by the editor; but it remains to justify the months, not preserved in the papyrus and about which the editor does not speculate. The indiction and era years come into play here: year 256–225 began on Thoth 1, 579 and ran to Epagomenai 5, 580. The indiction is preserved only as] ἀρχῇ ιδ. The date belongs to the class of Oxyrhynchite datings to indiction x, ἀρχῇ x + 1; where there is no word for “indiction” after the second number, these dates are in every known case after 1 July, in the last two months of the lower-numbered indiction and the first two (reckoning by the *delegatio*) of the higher one.²⁰ We must therefore restore [month, day *ἰνδικτίωνος* ιγ] in line 5,²¹ and the last two months of indiction 13 (579/580) were July–August 580. This is the correct date.

5. *P. Mich.* XIII 666

The very top of this sixth-century lease, otherwise well-preserved, is missing, except for a small fragment. The missing lines will have contained the dating formula: at least a consulate and indiction, and if after A.D. 544 (cf. H.J. Wolff, *RIDA* 3 ser. 8 [1961] 147), probably a regnal formula as well. Of this, only]τιο[of *ἰνδικτίωνος* survives on the main body of the papyrus, but the editor remarks (1n.) that “it is not excluded that line 2 of the small fragment should be read:]ερ θ/[] εκ[, i.e. Μεχε]ῖρ θ/[] εκ[της *ἰνδικ*]τιωνος which would imply that the fragment closely preceded the remains of line 1.”

The lease is drawn for indiction 6, and normally this should indicate that the document itself dates from the preceding indiction, 5. A date of Mecheir 9, ind. 6, would paradoxically place this document 9 months *after* the harvest of indiction 6. A solution is found by consulting the plate (XXIV): the fragment reads]..θπέμ[; restore]..θπέμ[πτης *ἰνδικ*]τιο[νος. A normal pattern is thus reestablished. We are not certain that Mecheir is the correct month; a phi also seems possible, suggesting Epeiph, and

²⁰ See *CSBE* 26–27 for such dates.

²¹ Following the normal formula, for which see the text cited in *CSBE* 59 nn.32–35. One would suppose that *P. Oxy.* XVI 1994 was intended to have this formula as well: perhaps Ἐπειφ κ (ι)γ ἰνδ. ἀρχ(ῇ) ιδ should be understood or something similar.

Hathyr seems also possible. [Dr. Sijpesteijn confirms on the original that 'Aθ]ϑρ is possible.

6. *P. Stras.* I 46–51

These six surety contracts, which formed originally a single roll, written by one hand, seem all to have been dated to 17.iii.566, or Phamenoth 21 of the first year of Justinus II, twenty-fifth postconsular year of Basilius, and fourteenth indiction.²² The editor, Preisigke, summarizes as follows the contents of the documents:

Die sechs Bürgschaftserklärungen werden gerichtet τῇ δημοσίᾳ ἀγορᾷ oder τῷ δημοσίῳ λόγῳ zu Händen des ἀρχιυπηρέτης der Stadt Antinoupolis und bezwecken die gesicherte Versorgung der Stadt mit Fleischwaren für die Dauer der 14. Indiktion. Die 14. Indiktion währt zu dieser Zeit vom Mai/Juni 565 bis Mai/Juni 566. Da unsere Urkunden in März 566 abgefasst worden sind, so war jene Indiktion sonderbarerweise schon beinahe abgelaufen. (p. 163)

The phrase on the basis of which Preisigke made these remarks is the following: ἀπὸ τῆς ἁγίας ἀγιοστάσεως τῆς παρούσης τεσσαρεσκαδεκάτης ἰνδικτίονος ἕως τῆς παραλήψεως τῆς σὺν Θεῷ πεντεκαδεκάτης ἰνδικτίονος (*P. Stras.* 46.14–16). The curious ἀγιοστάσεως was replaced with ἀναστάσεως by Hunt and Edgar (*Sel. Pap.* II 364), who translate “from the holy Easter day of the present 14th indiction to the time of taking over in the (D.V.) 15th indiction.” They interpreted the latter term as “perhaps the taking over of the contract by another.”²³

The ἀνάστασις—Easter—of indiction 14 fell on 28.iii.566, 11 days after the date of these documents. It is therefore clear that we cannot be dealing with the fourteenth indiction as a term of office, for that indiction had, as Preisigke realized already, only until 25.iv (or 30.iv if the Roman I May was used as the starting point) to run.²⁴ Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that the παράληψις of the 15th indiction means its start;²⁵ such terminology has no parallel or even relative in other documents. It must be an event of some kind which would occur during the 15th indiction. Since the date is not stated by the civil calendar, and since

²² Most of them are badly damaged and missing some of these indications, but none gives any sign of another date.

²³ Photos kindly provided by J. Schwartz have allowed us to confirm this and other readings. The entry in *WB* I s.v. ἀγιοστάσις (“Beginn?”) must be deleted.

²⁴ See *CSBE* 25–26.

²⁵ As it was taken by Preisigke (also in *WB* II s.v., 2). Hunt and Edgar likewise reject this interpretation.

the other terminus is a church festival, we may surmise that some other moveable feast is intended.²⁶

The character of the documents gives us a clue: they are concerned with assuring an adequate supply of every kind of meat in a period beginning with Easter. Now a lengthy period of fasting before Easter, nominally forty days, had been introduced into the church in Egypt by Athanasius in 334.²⁷ Abstinence from meat was a part—though not the whole—of this Lenten fast. The period after Easter, by contrast, was liturgically a period of rejoicing, during which fasting was strictly forbidden (along with kneeling in church).²⁸ The early history of this Eastertide period is much discussed,²⁹ but in the third and fourth centuries it was certainly a period of 50 days (inclusive reckoning) culminating with the great feast of Pentecost on the seventh Sunday after Easter. The festival marked not only the descent of the Holy Spirit on the church, but also the Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven which had preceded the descent of the Spirit.³⁰ The distinction of Ascension from Pentecost did not occur until the late fourth century in Antioch in Syria; we do not know of any evidence on the normal practice in Egypt in the mid-sixth century.³¹

The provision of meat in the Strasbourg papyri thus comes at the one time of the Christian year when feasting would most conspicuously replace fasting and when the meat supply would need to be abundant. The enormous consumption of meat at Eastertide persists today in Mediterranean countries, and the contrast with the preceding Lent was much greater in past centuries when secularization and affluence were alike less prevalent. In this context we must ask what the terminus is to which *παράλημψις* refers, for this is not the normal term either for Ascension, which is *ἀνάλημψις*, nor for Pentecost (*πεντηκοστή*). Given the liturgical situation described, however, it is difficult to avoid the supposition that one or both are meant. The papyri do not help us here, for references to these

26 No more does Hunt and Edgar's surmise that the word refers to the taking over of the contract by someone else seem acceptable; a date in the civil calendar would be the normal means of reference to such an occurrence, and if we were dealing with a civil phenomenon, one would not find a date to a church festival as the point of reference.

27 See *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* VII, 515–17 and *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* V, 766–67, for general treatments; more detail on some aspects in J. Schümmer, *Die altchristliche Fastenpraxis* (Liturgiegeschichtlichen Quellen und Forschungen 27, Münster 1933) 51–81.

28 *RAC* VII, 757–58; cf. A.A. MacArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (London 1953) 147–57 for a general account.

29 A lengthy discussion can be found in J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*² (Leiden 1961) 182–205. A 50-day period after Passover is called *πεντηκοστή* already in LXX 2 Macc. 12.32.

30 See nn.28 and 29 for pertinent references.

31 See MacArthur (*supra*, n.28) for a discussion.

festivals are absent from the documents: no occurrence of ἀνάλημψις or πεντηκοστή in the liturgical sense is to be found in the published volumes of the *WB*.³²

Although παράλημψις is not to our knowledge attested with reference to the Ascension, the semantic force of παραλαμβάνω can at times be very close to that of ἀναλαμβάνω. In Mt 24.40 and Lk 17.34 Jesus says that εἰς παραλαμβάνεται [by the angels] καὶ εἰς ἀφίεται when the day comes; and in Jn 14.3 Jesus promises to the disciples that he will come again and παραλήμψομαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἐμαυτόν. If παράλημψις can be the equivalent of ἀνάλημψις, then, there is no real objection to believing that we have a reference here to the Ascension.

We are, however, thus brought back to the question of Pentecost, which is liturgically the proper termination of the period of Easter rejoicing and hence of feasting. If Ascension and Pentecost were distinguished in the church of Egypt at this time, we would have to explain why the feast period was ended at Ascension and not Pentecost, and for this reason it seems preferable to suppose that the two feasts still coincided in Egypt. What then of the use of παράλημψις? Does it refer to Ascension and not Pentecost? A passage of Eusebius (*Vita Const.* 4.64) is suggestive: he refers to τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνάληψιν τοῦ κοινοῦ σωτῆρος τὴν τε τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος εἰς ἀνθρώπους κάθοδον: the ascension of our common savior into heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit to men.³³ The two feasts are clearly shown by the passage to be one—which Eusebius refers to as πεντηκοστή—and the word which receives principal place is ἀνάλημψις, the normal term for Ascension (cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v.). The more general παράλημψις may be merely a less specific substitute for ἀνάλημψις, or may refer to the receipt of the Holy Spirit as well. We are thus led to suggest that παράλημψις was used as a term suited to the united (or not yet divided) festival of Ascension and Pentecost—16.v.566 in the case in point.³⁴

7. *P. Stras.* 397

This papyrus (see plate after page 287) from Hermopolis contains, after three fragmentary lines, an invocation and dating formula, of which

³² Easter, however, is represented by a few instances of Πάσχα and ἀνάλημψις.

³³ Quoted by MacArthur (*supra*, n.28) 151.

³⁴ It is at least curious that in the eastern churches today Ascension seems to be a feast of major importance, Pentecost a much less prominent one: cf. O.F.A. Meinardus, *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern* (Cairo 1965) 66–67 (for the Coptic church), 81–84 (for Greek Catholic and Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox). Was the use of ἀνάλημψις and παράλημψις for the joint festival a token of this dominance of Ascension over Pentecost even in antiquity?

the editor's reading and restoration are as follows:

Ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς ἀγίας ζω]οποιοῦ καὶ ὁμοουσίου ἐν μου[ά]δι τριάδος
π(ατ)ρ(ὸς) καὶ υἱ(ο)ῦ καὶ ἀγίου] πν(εύματο)ς Ἐγράφη μηνεὶ

Πα. [. . .] ὀγδόῃ

καὶ τῆς τρίτης καὶ] δεκάτης ἰνδικτίονος ἀ[πὸ] Διοκλητιανοῦ
πρώτου

ἔτους διακοσιοστοῦ πεν]τηκοστοῦ [[ἐν . . . οὐ]] ἐν Ἑρμ[ο]υπόλει

Fragments of two further lines in a cursive hand remain below.

On the basis of these restorations he dates the papyrus to A.D. 535, remarking "les données chronologiques, partielles, des l.6 et 7 nous mènent en 535 p.C." The basis of this statement is the fact that an indiction ending in 10 (i.e. 10–15) and a year of Diocletian ending in –fifty-one can coincide only once in every 300 years, and 534/5 is such a coincidence. This date led the editor to comment concerning the invocation: "La formule, attestée jusqu'ici à partir de 582 p.C. (cf. *P.S.I.* 59), est plus ancienne dans les papyrus."

The sudden discovery of an invocation a half-century before it is otherwise attested in the papyri arouses unease. In fact, the earliest published example of *invocatio* comes from June of 591, and it seems that the *invocatio* was introduced throughout Egypt at about this time.³⁵ What is more, the earliest formula used is not that found in *P.Stras.* 397, but rather an invocation of Jesus Christ only: ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου καὶ δεσπότου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν. Trinitarian formulas first appear under Phocas; to suppose that a fully complicated one was found first and once only in 535, went out of use for 56 years, was succeeded in 591 by a simple invocation of Christ, and finally reappeared in the 7th century in similar form—this is all very implausible.

There is a further difficulty: the era of Diocletian is never used to date any papyrus document before 656/7,³⁶ after the Arab conquest. Our document has no consulate, which one would certainly find in 535 and even later. Nor does it have the regnal year found commonly from after 537 until the end of Byzantine rule in Egypt in 641. The use of the era of Diocletian devoid of either of the other two may plausibly be expected any time after the Arab conquest, but not before. Even then, the era is found in extant published papyri only from the Arsinoite and Herakleopolite Nomes until

35 *PSI* I 59, cited by Bureth for 582, in fact belongs in 596 (*BL* I 390). The earliest invocation we know is *SB* I 4858 (2.vi.591); other Arsinoite examples for 591 are *BGU* I 295 and *SB* I 4484. The earliest Herakleopolite example is *P. Erl.* 87 (592), Hermopolite *P. Stras.* 190 (592), Syenite *P. Lond.* V 1733 (594). A full treatment by Z. Borkowski is to appear in the *Actes du XV^e Congrès International de Papyrologie* (in *Pap.Brux.*).

36 See *CSBE* 43–49. *SB* I 4665 is the earliest example.

it appears in Greek subscriptions to Arabic documents from Thebes in 734/5 and later.³⁷

Invocation and era alike, therefore, lead us to suspect that *P. Stras.* 397 must be dated after the middle of the seventh century. And yet the editor's argument about the date is not without force, as a Greek papyrus with an invocation and date of this kind is hardly to be expected in A.D. 834,³⁸ the next available date. In our puzzlement we asked Professor Jacques Schwartz for a photograph, which he kindly supplied. From this we observed first that in line 7 the supralinear writing was in fact *πρώτη* rather than *πρώτου*; but the significance of this fact for the argument remains unclear (see below).

More interesting is the hand of the invocation and dating clause, a slanting majuscule. This hand (reproduced in the plate below) is rather common in Greek literary productions of the sixth and later centuries, but it is not at all like ordinary Greek documentary hands of this period.³⁹ In fact, we have found only one example, a petition dated to the seventh century (on palaeographical grounds) and numbered mistakenly among a large group of theological fragments because of its similarity to their hands!⁴⁰ The hand is, however, perfectly acceptable as one type of Coptic documentary hand of the eighth century; cf. Ryl 175 (Pl. I), a somewhat more elegant version which led Crum to remark that it "confirms Krall's axiom, that 8th century scribes tend to avoid ligatures" (p. ix). Ryl 175 is dated to Diocl. 437 (A.D. 720/1), and comes from Hermopolis. Ryl 214 is also somewhat similar.⁴¹

Even if *P. Stras.* 397 is Coptic—a question we leave open for the moment—a date in the ninth century creates problems. Not much of the tolerably abundant Coptic material from Hermopolis (Shmoun) is later than the eighth century,⁴² and more telling, we cannot cite any invocation formulas of this sort—a Greek formula prefixed to a Coptic document—

³⁷ *CSBE* 49.

³⁸ Not 835; Professor Schwartz tells us that Pauni is the month to be read, and that month will fall at the start of the year in question (Diocl. 551=834/5), cf. *CSBE* 43–49.

³⁹ We are indebted to William H. Willis for some advice here, though he is not to be held responsible for our conclusions. 6th century: D. Serruys, pl. II (after p. 448) in *Mélanges E. Chatelain* (Paris 1910), lower margin (Dublin St. Cyril); 7th c.: E. Maunde Thompson, *Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (Oxford 1912) no. 48 (mathematical treatise); *P. Graec. Berol.* pl. 44b (Nonnos); 9th c. (or later 8th): R. Seider, *Paläographie des griechischen Papyri* II (Taf. II) (Stuttgart 1970) pl. XXXIX, no. 69 (Andreas of Crete).

⁴⁰ *P. Lond.* I 113.12d (Atlas I, pl. 144d); cf. pl. 145, 113.13b.

⁴¹ In V. Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums und des Mittelalters C. I, Heidelberg 1936) pl. 11, Ryl 175 is illustrated along with a somewhat similar Cairo piece dated to 732/3. No other plate in Stegemann shows anything much like this hand.

⁴² See Crum's remarks in Ryl, p. ix, and BM, p. xv.

after the middle of the eighth century.⁴³ Nor is the use of the era of Diocletian attested in Coptic papyri after the same time.⁴⁴ A date in 833 thus seems nearly as improbable as one in 533.

Evidently there is some error, either scribal or editorial. The reading of δεκάτης in line 6 is certain. We were led therefore to consider]τηκοστού in line 7. If the tau were uncertain, one might consider dates which would coincide with $10 + x$ indictions, such as Diocl. 470 = A.D. 653/4, 460 = 743/4, 490 = 773/4. From the photograph, however, we can exclude mu and nu as readings of the critical letter, of which there survives largely a horizontal top stroke. Professor Schwartz has examined the letter in question at our request and reports that "il y a bien un tau et non pas un xi." He goes on to suggest a solution: that the erased portion after [πεν]-τηκοστοῦ be read ἐννάτου; we would then be dealing originally, before correction, with Diocl. 459, A.D. 742/3.⁴⁵ That this suits the palaeography and use of the era has been shown already. Some further comments on the invocation may help to confirm this conclusion.

The invocation here is of the "Holy, vivifying and consubstantial Trinity in unity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost." Note that the enumeration of the persons follows the Trinity with its adjectives. This precise form of the invocation is apparently found only at Hermopolis. Its earliest form, lacking "consubstantial" and "in unity", appears already in Phocas' reign in Greek documents,⁴⁶ and remains standard under Heraclius.⁴⁷ The form we find in *P. Stras.* 397 is otherwise attested only in Hermopolite Coptic papyri of the 8th century, all unfortunately without absolute date.⁴⁸ Some of the Jeme papyri, however, offer a formula which is identical to ours except that the persons are enumerated before the Trinity phrase rather than after it. There are numerous examples in *P. Lond.* IV,⁴⁹ ranging in the dated

43 KRU 15 (SB I 5564) (8.xi.756) is the latest. For most of the certainly 8th century examples, however, we have no absolute date preserved.

44 KRU 15 (see n.43) is again the latest we know of. W. Till, *Datierung und Prosopographie der koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben* (SB Wien 240.1, Wien 1962) 37 rejects a year 529 in KRU 100 (SB I 5607). The era is found later, however, as the "era of the Martyrs" in Coptic MSS; cf. W. Till in A. Grohmann, *Arabische Chronologie* (Leiden 1966) 42.

45 We would print the dating numbers as τῆς δω]δεκάτης ἑνδικτίονος and τετρακοσιοστοῦ πεν]τηκοστοῦ, accordingly.

46 *P. Ross. Georg.* III 49, of which all but [ἀγ]ίου is lost in the invocation, may have had this formula (604/5); it is fully preserved in BGU XII 2207 (12.x.606). The Coptic CPR IV 23 (29.viii.606) still has a Christ formula.

47 A later installment of these notes will present the evidence. SB I 4669 adds ἀχράντου before ζωοποιού.

48 Examples: Ryl 121 (fragmentary, mentions ind. 7 and 9) and I 15; BKU III 355 (ind. 15).

49 E.g. 1494 and 1496; cf. index s.v. τριάς for other examples. It is interesting that Bureth cites just these papyri as parallels to the Strasbourg phrase.

examples from 708 to 711 (the period of this archive). KRU offers numerous examples in the word order of the Hermopolite text but lacking *ἐν μονάδι*.⁵⁰

What of the correction? The document dates from near the start of the indiction year, in Pauni; also, as we have argued, near the start of the year by the era of Diocletian. An error is not surprising, but it is odd that the correction is apparently not to *ἐξηκοστοῦ*, as one might expect, but seemingly to *πρώτη*, which is ungrammatical and unexpected. We cannot solve this aspect of the puzzle, but the correct date seems actually to be in Diocl. 460, and thus in 743.

P. Stras. 397 comes from a date at which true Greek documents on papyrus are otherwise extinct;⁵¹ it is dated by a system never attested in Greek papyri from the Hermopolite; it uses an invocation formula never found in Greek papyri; it is written in a hand which is extremely rare in Greek documents (as contrasted with literary texts). But at this time Coptic documents from the Hermopolite are not rare; the use of Diocletian's era in Coptic papyri is still known after 743; the invocation formula and the handwriting are paralleled in 8th century Coptic documents. We conclude that *P. Stras. 397* is a Coptic document, using a Greek form of the invocation formula and dating clause, a late vestige of Hellenic formulas in an environment where Greek had been submerged.⁵²

8. SB I 4504

This acknowledgement of loan of money to be repaid in wine⁵³ presents an anomaly in the published version: the date is given as year 4 of Heraclius, *Ἀθῶρ κβ, ἐν[δ(ικτίονος) δευτέρᾳς]*, or 18.xi.613. The loan is to be repaid (lines 22–23) *ἐν τῷ καιρῷ[τ]ῆς τρύγης τῆς σὺν[θ(εῶ)] εἰσιούσης β[ῖνδ(ικτίονος)]*. The description of indiction 2 as “coming” at a time when a date by it is already given is contradictory. In fact, however, one can see from the drawing in the original publication⁵⁴ that in line 23 one must read

50 This seems not chronologically significant, as several types of invocation occur in 8th century Jeme papyri: compare to the KRU texts CPR IV 26 and CLT I, 2, 4, 6 and 10. Herm 26 and 36 apparently have similar formulas, as also VC 8.

51 *SPP* III 338 is the last we know of, 9.xii.716, unless one wishes to count *P. Grenf.* II 105 and 106, bilingual texts from 719.

52 We can make little of the damaged lines 8–9. In line 2 we read ΧΥΜΟΤΝ the Coptic name of Hermopolis, and Professor Schwartz has kindly confirmed this on the original. He writes: “Je signale que la barre horizontale du djandja n'est plus visible, parce que cachée, sans doute, par un pli du papyrus. La diagonale inférieure que l'on voit appartient sûrement à quelque chose qui précède (un alpha ou un kappa très grand?).”

53 See *GRBS* 18 (1977) 85–96 for the type of document.

54 W.A. Schmidt, *Die griechischen Papyrusurkunden der kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin 1842) 17.

γ ἰνδ[ικ(τίονος)]. The anomaly is thus removed, as the reference is actually to the coming year. In line 6, furthermore, one should print 'Αθὺρ κ, β ἰν[δικτίονος]. The date is thus 16.xi.613.

9. SB I 4689

In verso line 5 of this fragment we find the following date Μεσορ(ῆ) λε ἰν(δικτίονος). Numbering month days over 30 is not rare in Theban ostraka dating to the first two centuries after Christ,⁵⁵ but in a Byzantine text from the Fayum it is quite unparalleled. Nor is a 35th indiction to be expected. The text must be printed as follows: Μεσορ(ῆ) λ, ε ἰν(δικτίονος): Mesore 30, 5th indiction.

10. SPP XX 101

As published, this fragmentary text presents the consuls of 357 in a much restored form, omitting the numeral for Julianus Caesar (II). Dr. H. Harrauer has examined the original at our request, and he writes that line 8 must be read as follows, allowing for the space available: [Ἰουλιανοῦ Καίσαρος τὸ β Θ]ῶθ κε. The date is thus 22.ix.357, and the only unusual feature of the formula is the omission of τοῦ ἐπιφανεστάτου.⁵⁶

11. SPP XX 243 and SB I 5278

In the list of attestations of ἀρχὴ in *CSBE* (p.57), *SPP XX 243*, an Arsinoite text of the 7th century, is listed under Epeiph 13; under the same day appears *SB I 5278*, an undated Arsinoite text. *SPP XX 243* has a date of indiction 7, while *SB 5278* is assigned to indiction 8. These two are nonetheless the same papyrus.

SB 5278 republishes a quotation of an extract of a Vienna papyrus, numbered D 1 in the old inventory, given by C. Wessely in his dissertation.⁵⁷ Numerous other quotations from the same papyrus appear in the dissertation, and a comparison of these with the text of *SPP XX 243* shows unmistakably that the same papyrus must be meant.⁵⁸ Complete confirmation is available: *SPP XX 243* is the text of no.477 in the *Führer durch die Sammlung Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer* (Wien 1894); in that place the inventory number is given as D 1, just as it is cited by Wessely in his dissertation.

⁵⁵ See e.g. *O. Ont. Mus.* II 84.4n. for bibliography.

⁵⁶ The correct formula was included in *CSBE* 112, but the exact date is to be added there.

⁵⁷ *Prolegomena ad papyrorum Graecorum novam collectionem edendam* (Wien 1883).

⁵⁸ See pp. 12, 17, 20, 32 n.15, 48 n.34, 49-50.

In fact, the reading is correct in *SPPXX* 243: 7th indiction. Indiction 8 must therefore be owed to a misreading or misprint by Wessely or his printer. In short, *SB*5278 is an extract of *SPPXX* 243 and should be struck from the list of occurrences of $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$.

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